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Pentagon reports on Koran abuse

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5 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Pentagon reports on Koran abuse

BNE: The Pentagon has provided details of the alleged desecration of Islam's holy book, the Koran, at Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba. Brigadier General Jay Hood described five incidents of mishandling of the Koran, including instances of it being kicked and splashed with human urine. On one occasion a guard apparently left his post and urinated near an air vent, and "the wind blew his urine through the vent" and into a cell block splashing a detainee and his Koran.

Reports of a Koran being flushed in a toilet, as published by *Newsweek* magazine, were found to be untrue. *Newsweek* later retracted the story and admitted they were unsure of the integrity of their source. This was not before the article had sparked outrage around the Muslim world and 16 people died in protests. Muslims burned U.S. flags and vowed revenge. As recently as June 1, the Pakistan Senate called for an international inquiry into the incident.

Brigadier Hood said the mishandling cases happened in 2003. He explained that as detainees and their Korans are moved thousands of times every week, accidents can occur. He stated: "Mishandling a Koran at Guantanamo Bay is a rare occurrence. Mishandling of a Koran here is never condoned." Camp guidelines regarding the handling of the Koran are very strict. Only Muslim clergymen, interpreters or the prisoners themselves can touch the holy book.

WARM-UPS

1. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

The Pentagon / holy books / the Koran / Guantanamo Bay / toilets / Newsweek magazine / burning U.S. flags / revenge / accidents / protests

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

2. THE PENTAGON: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the Pentagon. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them.

3. STORY PREDICTION: In pairs / groups, use the words from the “CHAT” activity to predict how the story in the article will unfold. Change partners and compare your stories. If you have different interpretations or ideas, talk about which is likelier to be in the actual article.

4. BACKGROUND SEARCH: Look at the headline. In pairs / groups, pool everything you know about the background to this story. Try to establish the facts and a timeline of events. Visit other pairs / groups to increase the amount of information you have. When you have finished, write down three issues that arise from your findings. Give your opinions on the rights and wrongs of these issues. Find new partners and talk about rights and wrongs again.

5. PENTAGON REPORT OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, talk about the following opinions on the Koran abuse report. On which side of the fence do you sit?

- a. It is from a U.S. military investigation therefore it must be true.
- b. I think it's a bit of a whitewash and a cover-up.
- c. The authorities at Guantanamo Bay have done a fine job at finding the truth. The Muslim world can now be happy.
- d. The editors and publishers from *Newsweek* magazine should face trial and go to prison. Their lies resulted in sixteen deaths.
- e. I think this report will only make Muslims angrier.
- f. It's time to free the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. They have no information.
- g. There will be another abuse against Muslims and their culture and religion. There are too many soldiers who don't like Muslims.
- h. If U.S. soldiers were in a Taliban or Saddam Hussein prison camp, I don't think they'd get Bibles. Guantanamo Bay prisoners are lucky to have Korans.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. The U.S. military conducted an investigation into abuses of the Koran. | T / F |
| b. The report says five incidents of mishandling the Koran occurred. | T / F |
| c. A camp guard urinated over a Koran. | T / F |
| d. Reports that a Koran was flushed down the toilet are true. | T / F |
| e. Sixteen people died because of an incorrect <i>Newsweek</i> article. | T / F |
| f. Pakistan wants an international probe into the Koran abuse. | T / F |
| g. The Koran is mishandled thousands of times every week at the camp. | T / F |
| h. Guantanamo Bay guards are allowed to touch the Koran. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. alleged | probe |
| b. desecration | withdrew |
| c. mishandling | excused |
| d. retracted | exceptional |
| e. sparked | defilement |
| f. vowed | ignited |
| g. inquiry | purported |
| h. rare | clerics |
| i. condoned | promised |
| j. clergymen | abuse |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. provided | Islam's holy book |
| b. alleged desecration of | into the incident |
| c. splashed with | details of |
| d. <i>Newsweek</i> later retracted | revenge |
| e. unsure of the integrity | occurrence |
| f. sparked | outrage |
| g. vowed | clergymen |
| h. an international inquiry | of their source |
| i. a rare | the story |
| j. Muslim | human urine |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

Pentagon reports on Koran abuse

BNE: The Pentagon has _____ details of the alleged _____ of Islam's holy book, the Koran, at Guantanamo Bay _____ camp in Cuba. Brigadier General Jay Hood described five incidents of _____ of the Koran, including instances of it being kicked and _____ with human urine. On one occasion a guard _____ left his post and urinated near an air _____, and "the wind blew his urine through the vent" and into a _____ block splashing a detainee and his Koran.

splashed
detention
cell
mishandling
provided
apparently
vent
deseccration

Reports of a Koran being _____ in a toilet, as published by *Newsweek* magazine, were found to be untrue. *Newsweek* later _____ the story and admitted they were unsure of the _____ of their _____. This was not before the article had _____ outrage around the Muslim world and 16 people died in protests. Muslims burned U.S. flags and _____ revenge. As _____ as June 1, the Pakistan Senate called for an _____ inquiry into the incident.

retracted
recently
vowed
flushed
sparked
source
international
integrity

Brigadier Hood said the _____ cases happened in 2003. He explained that as _____ and their Korans are moved thousands of times every week, _____ can occur. He stated: "Mishandling a Koran at Guantanamo Bay is a _____ occurrence. Mishandling of a Koran here is never _____." Camp _____ regarding the handling of the Koran are very strict. Only Muslim _____, interpreters or the prisoners _____ can touch the holy book.

rare
themselves
accidents
mishandling
guidelines
clergymen
condoned
detainees

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'holy' and 'book'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT GUANTANAMO BAY SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about Guantanamo Bay and the Koran abuse scandal.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| • desecration | • died |
| • General | • Pakistan |
| • post | • moved |
| • cell | • guidelines |
| • <i>Newsweek</i> | • condoned |
| • integrity | • clergymen |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your expectations when you read the headline?
- b. Have you been following this news?
- c. Are you surprised by the military's conclusion?
- d. Do you think it is a fair conclusion or is it a whitewash?
- e. Should the guard who kicked the Koran be punished?
- f. Should *Newsweek* be punished?
- g. There have been many instances of abuses of prisoners and Islamic culture. Do you think the U.S. Army is anti-Muslim?
- h. Do you think U.S. soldiers would be allowed a Bible if they were in Taliban prisons?
- i. Do you think Guantanamo prisoners are fairly treated?
- j. Do you believe reports of human rights violations?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading the article?
- b. How did this news make you feel?
- c. Do you always read news about Guantanamo Bay?
- d. Do you really believe that "the wind blew his urine through the vent"? Doesn't that sound a bit fishy?
- e. Why is the U.S. military still keeping people imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay?
- f. Why is it taking more than three years to get information from prisoners?
- g. What would you think if someone burned your national flag?
- h. Should there be an international inquiry into the Koran abuse?
- i. Do you think there'll be more abuse stories?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

NEWS REPORT: You must prepare a report for tomorrow's morning news. Your story is the Guantanamo Bay Koran abuse. The outline for your report is in the table. Think of three things to say about each of the words below to build into your report.

WORDS	THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THEM IN THE NEWS REPORT
The Pentagon report	1. 2. 3.
Guantanamo Bay	1. 2. 3.
Koran	1. 2. 3.
<i>Newsweek</i>	1. 2. 3.
Camp guidelines	1. 2. 3.
Conclusion	1. 2. 3.

After you have finished, change partners / groups. Report your news items to your new partner(s) as a dress rehearsal for tomorrow's news programme. You may use the words in the column on the left as prompts. Do not look at the other column.

Give advice / feedback to make your respective reports better.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Pentagon reports on Koran abuse

BNE: The Pentagon has provided details of _____ of Islam's holy book, the Koran, at Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba. Brigadier General Jay Hood described five _____ of the Koran, including instances of it being kicked and splashed with _____. On one occasion a guard apparently left his post and urinated near an air vent, and "the wind blew his urine through the vent" and into a cell block _____ and his Koran.

Reports of a Koran being flushed in a toilet, as published by *Newsweek* magazine, were found to be untrue. *Newsweek* later _____ and admitted they were _____ of their source. This was not before the article had _____ around the Muslim world and 16 people died in protests. Muslims burned U.S. flags and _____. As recently as June 1, the Pakistan Senate called for an international inquiry into the incident.

Brigadier Hood said the _____ in 2003. He explained that as detainees and their Korans are moved thousands of times every week, accidents can occur. He stated: "Mishandling a Koran at Guantanamo Bay is _____. Mishandling of a Koran here is _____." Camp guidelines regarding the handling of the Koran are very strict. Only Muslim _____, interpreters or the prisoners themselves can touch the holy book.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the Koran abuse scandal. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. HOLY BOOK: Choose a holy book from any religion other than your own. Make a fact sheet about the history of the book and its main teachings. Compare the histories and teachings of the different holy books in your next class. Discuss the similarities and differences in the teachings.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Brigadier General Jay Hood telling him what you think of the conclusion of the Koran abuse scandal. Show your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. F e. T f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. alleged | purported |
| b. desecration | defilement |
| c. mishandling | abuse |
| d. retracted | withdrew |
| e. sparked | ignited |
| f. vowed | promised |
| g. inquiry | probe |
| h. rare | exceptional |
| i. condoned | excused |
| j. clergymen | clerics |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. provided | details of |
| b. alleged desecration of | Islam's holy book |
| c. splashed with | human urine |
| d. <i>Newsweek</i> later retracted | the story |
| e. unsure of the integrity | of their source |
| f. sparked | outrage |
| g. vowed | revenge |
| h. an international inquiry | into the incident |
| i. a rare | occurrence |
| j. Muslim | clergymen |

GAP FILL:

Pentagon reports on Koran abuse

BNE: The Pentagon has **provided** details of the alleged **desecration** of Islam's holy book, the Koran, at Guantanamo Bay **detention** camp in Cuba. Brigadier General Jay Hood described five incidents of **mishandling** of the Koran, including instances of it being kicked and **splashed** with human urine. On one occasion a guard **apparently** left his post and urinated near an air **vent**, and "the wind blew his urine through the vent" and into a **cell** block splashing a detainee and his Koran.

Reports of a Koran being **flushed** in a toilet, as published by *Newsweek* magazine, were found to be untrue. *Newsweek* later **retracted** the story and admitted they were unsure of the **integrity** of their **source**. This was not before the article had **sparked** outrage around the Muslim world and 16 people died in protests. Muslims burned U.S. flags and **vowed** revenge. As **recently** as June 1, the Pakistan Senate called for an **international** inquiry into the incident.

Brigadier Hood said the **mishandling** cases happened in 2003. He explained that as **detainees** and their Korans are moved thousands of times every week, **accidents** can occur. He stated: "Mishandling a Koran at Guantanamo Bay is a **rare** occurrence. Mishandling of a Koran here is never **condoned**." Camp **guidelines** regarding the handling of the Koran are very strict. Only Muslim **clergymen**, interpreters or the prisoners **themselves** can touch the holy book.